

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 00192 111323Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01
/075 W

-----111336Z 004488 /65

R 111200Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7026
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 0192

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, LE
SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON

1. DURING MY CALL ON LEBANESE AMBASSADOR SAMEEH AL-BABA JANUARY 10, WE DISCUSSED THE EFFORTS OF LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS TO OBTAIN ASSISTANCE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION OF LEBANON. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY ABOUT RECENT VISIT OF AL-HOSS TO KUWAIT, AL-BABA PREFACED HIS REPLY BY DESCRIBING THE RESULTS OF HIS PRIME MINISTER'S EARLIER VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA.

2. AL-BABA HAD LEARNED FROM THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THE SAUDIS WERE, OF COURSE, READY AND WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY TO LEBANESE RECONSTRUCTION, BUT FIRST SUGGESTED
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 00192 111323Z

THAT AL-HOSS CONTACT ALL OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES--EVEN ONES WHICH MIGHT NOT BE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE MUCH-- IN ORDER TO REMIND THEM OF ARAB RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSIST LEBANON AT THIS JUNCTURE. AFTER HE HAD COMPLETED THIS SURVEY OF ARAB COUNTRIES, THE SAUDIS RECOMMENDED THAT AL-HOSS SUGGEST THE BEST WAY FOR CHANNELING THIS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON, WHETHER THROUGH A MULTILATERAL FUND OR BY DIRECT

BILATERAL ASSISTANCE. AL-BABA SAID THAT THE CLEAR IMPLICATION WAS THAT SAUDI ARABIA AT THAT TIME WOULD SET THE EXAMPLE FOR THE OTHERS.

3. IN HIS TALKS WITH THE KUWAITI LEADERS, AL-HOSS LEARNED THAT THE GOK WAS ALSO READY TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON, BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT KUWAIT INTENDED TO WAIT FOR THE SAUDIS TO LEAD THIS EFFORT.

4. AL-BABA REPORTED THAT HIS PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE VISITING BAGHDAD JAN. 11 AND WOULD BE CONTINUING ON TO VISIT THE GULF STATES, BAHRAIN, QATAR AND THE UAE, AS PART OF THIS SAUDI-SUGGESTED SURVEY.

5. AL-BABA SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN THE PAPER WHICH HIS PRIME MINISTER HAD PRESENTED TO THE KUWAITI LEADERS ASSESSING THE DAMAGE SUFFERED BY LEBANON DURING THE RECENT CONFLICT. THE DAMAGES TOTALLED \$500 MILLION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND WERE ESTIMATED AT \$3 BILLION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THE LEBANESE AMBASSADOR ALSO EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE USG WOULD MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION FOR LEBANESE ASSISTANCE AND INDEED THAT THE US WOULD PERHAPS TAKE THE LEAD IN THIS EFFORT IN ORDER TO SET THE EXAMPLE FOR THE WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

I REMINDED AL-BABA THAT THE USG HAD ALREADY CONTRIBUTED NEARLY \$20 MILLION IN RELIEF ASSISTANCE AND I EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT THE WAYS IN WHICH THE US MIGHT BE ABLE TO ASSIST LEBANON WERE THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED DURING THE RECENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY THE LEBANESE EMISSARY AL-THUEINI.
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PAGE 03 KUWAIT 00192 111323Z

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KUWAIT00192
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770010-0332
Format: TEL
From: KUWAIT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770164/aaaacdmq.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 501b2fdb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3626979
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON
TAGS: PGOV, EAID, LE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/501b2fdb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009